Chapter 3 Transportation and Utilities

Vision

The automobile, the principal mode of transportation in Talbot County, shares the road with cyclists, pedestrians and others. The County continues to explore inter-county alternatives to the automobile as the principal means of transportation.

Through 'beach' traffic on US 50 is managed by all appropriate means to minimize bottlenecks. Traffic lights and road improvements have alleviated the increased traffic loads over time.

State and County roads reflect the rural character of the area. Highway beautification projects are underway along major highways.

The airport is a regional hub for general aviation and aviation related businesses.

Residents have ample access to reliable communications services throughout Talbot County.

Goal

Ensure the safe and efficient provision of transportation and utility services to the greatest degree possible**.**

Introduction

The efficient movement of people and goods and the provision of essential communications and other utilities are important to the quality of life and economic vitality of the community. The County recognizes the direct relationship between land use policies and the availability of these services.

The infrastructure policies outlined in this Plan are intended to support local land use plans while ensuring adequate transportation facilities exist to serve the needs of residents and industry as well as regional travel and utility needs.

The County's transportation system includes roads, trails, public transit, air transportation and port services. Motor vehicles are the County's primary mode of transportation and the transportation network is comprised of Federal, State, County, town and private roads.

Transportation priorities include a strong emphasis on managing existing resources, especially roads serving the villages, towns and rural areas. Measures taken to conserve the capacity of State and County roads should not only improve safety and traffic operations, but

also should have the added benefit of enhancing the visual character of the County when viewed from roadways.

For transportation improvements, the County relies on funding and construction participation from both the public and private sectors. Other utility development is driven by private sector investment.

Utility services are evolving from what had been established as long as a century ago. Traditional telephone service has been eclipsed by wireless services. Television programming has also moved to broadband services from an abundance of sources. These require a new infrastructure of communications towers, antennas and fiber optic cables.

Electric generation has begun on a similar path towards small scale independent facilities distributed across the landscape. Wind turbines and solar panels installed on County facilities are an indication of the changes on the horizon.

All future utility infrastructure should have the least impact possible on the landscape and character of the county, while providing the services necessary to maintain a high quality of life. Contemporary services must balance community character with the technical requirements for deployment.

Regional and Local Roads

Planning for State and Federal roadways in Talbot County is done by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), State Highway Administration (SHA), and is detailed in the Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The CTP describes ongoing and new capital programs to be implemented over a six-year period.

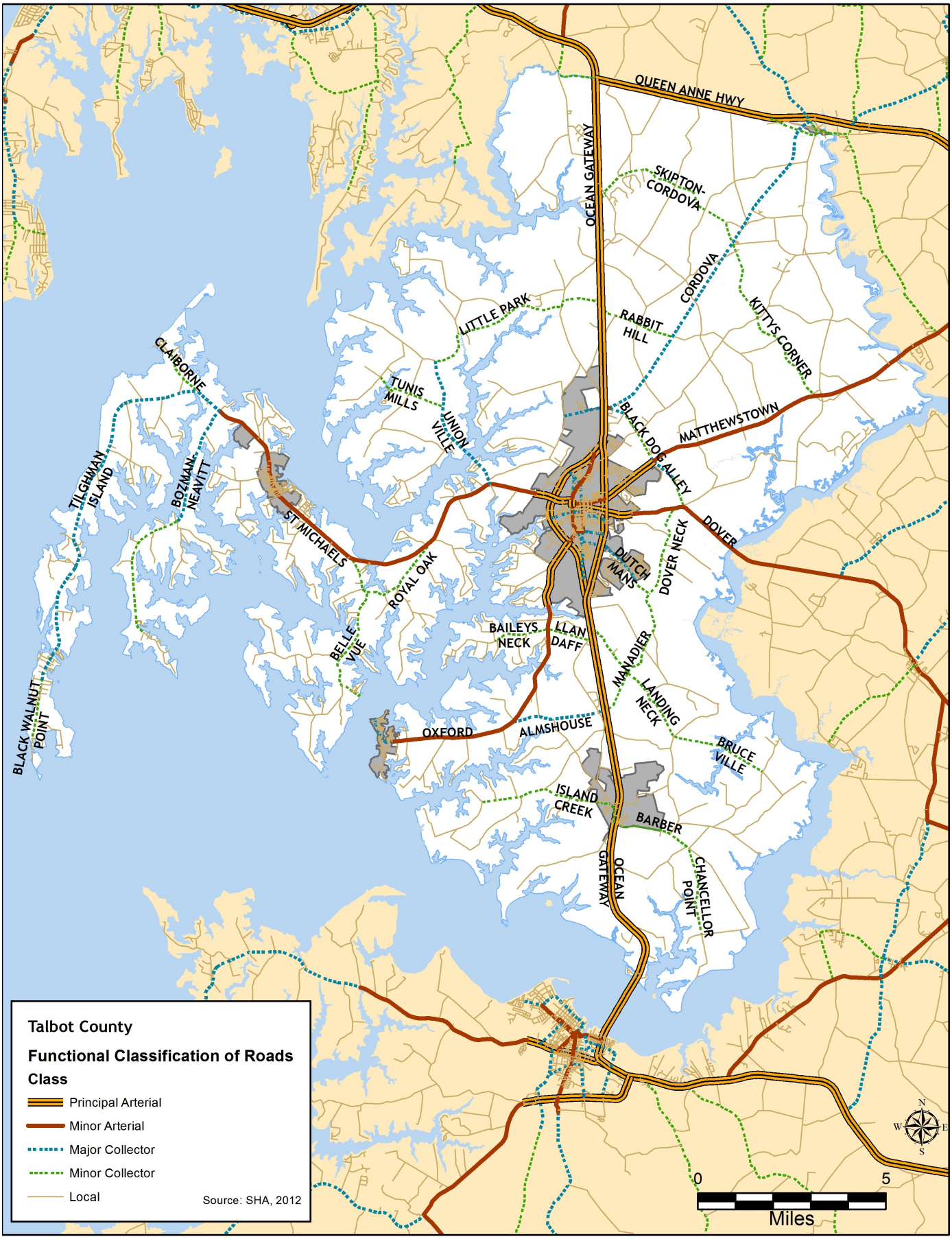
The SHA Data Services and Engineering System reports there are 126 miles of State roads in Talbot County, yielding 2,250,000 square yards of paved surface.

The most extensive part of the roadway network consists of 374 miles of County roads. Most are asphalt, with about 40 miles of public roads in other materials. Planning for County roads is done by the Department of Public Works, which is also actively involved in planning improvements for State roads as well as coordinating facility improvements with the local jurisdictions.

Some 492,228,349 annual vehicle miles are traveled through Talbot County on State roads alone. SHA estimates 608 million total annual vehicle miles traveled on all roads combined in the County.

State Roadway System

The State Highway Administration uses the Federal Highway Classification System for roadway classification to indicate the relative importance of any given road, to assign appropriate design standards and to measure individual roadways against the standards and prioritize needed improvements. When new roads are built by the public or private sector, they should be constructed to an appropriate standard for the road's intended function.


QUEEN ANNE HWY
OCEAN GATEWAY
SKIPTON-CORDOVA
CORDOVA
KITTYS CORNER
RABBIT HILL
LITTLE PARK
CLAIBORNE
TUNIS MILLS
UNION VILLE
BLACK DOG ALLEY
MATTHEWSTOWN
TILGHMAN ISLAND
BOZMAN NEAVITT
ST MICHAELS
DOVER
DOVER NECK
DUTCH MANS
ROYAL OAK
BAILEYS NECK
LLAN DAFF
MANADIER
BELLE VUE
LANDING NECK
BLACK WALNUT POINT
OXFORD
ALMSHOUSE
BRUCE VILLE
ISLAND CREEK
BARBER
OCEAN GATEWAY
CHANCELLOR POINT
Talbot County
Functional Classification of Roads
Class
Principal Arterial
Minor Arterial
Major Collector
Minor Collector
Local
Source: SHA, 2012
N
W
E
S
0
5
Miles

As illustrated on the preceding page, the Federal Highway Functional Classification System, State roadways are:

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Road

Principal and Minor Arterials

These are the State roadways in Talbot County that provide immediate regional access. US Route 50, MD 322 and MD 404 are classified as principal arterials. Minor arterials include MD 331, MD 328, MD 333, and MD 33.

Major and Minor Collectors

The primary function of major and minor collector roads is to expedite vehicle movement within localized areas. They provide moderate levels of service within, rather than between, regions in the County. Major collectors connect areas of relatively dense settlement with each other and with other major traffic routes. Minor collectors are roads which, in addition to serving abutting properties, intercept minor roads, connect community facilities and are intended to serve neighborhood traffic.

Local Roads

Local roads are intended to provide access to abutting residential property and not to accommodate through traffic.

The County has established a local road classification system (separate and distinct from the Federal Highway Functional Classification System) for the purpose of planning for County road improvements and assigning appropriate design standards. This classification system, included in the Talbot County Code, uses the following road hierarchy:

- Major Road
- Major Collector
- Major Village Arterial
- Minor Collector
- Minor Village Arterial
- Private Road

Transportation Facility Planning

The primary objective of the County's 2006 Thoroughfare Plan is 'to provide the County Council the means to make informed fiscal decisions for existing, short-term (2015), and long-term (2030) infrastructure improvements.'

The Plan includes an inventory of roadway conditions and provides a methodology for evaluating the transportation impact of new development. It also includes recommendations concerning roadway design and construction, access management, and pedestrian facilities. It also identifies mitigation measures to improve or reduce traffic impacts. Thoroughfare Plan findings and recommendations led to amendments to the Talbot County Code Chapter 134, Roads and Bridges.

The SHA Traffic Safety Division monitors and reports on traffic volumes, accidents and highway safety. This information is used in planning for needed state-funded highway improvements. The map at the end of this chapter reports traffic volumes on defined sections of State highways through the most recent data gathering period. Recent studies can be found online at www.roads.maryland.gov.

While traffic volume studies indicate aggregate trends, they do not represent peak traffic volume. For example, high levels of through traffic on US Route 50 create bottlenecks in Easton and Trappe, causing inconvenient and potentially dangerous

situations for County residents. Since 2005, improvements have been made to US 50, especially in the Town of Easton, including additional travel lanes, dedicated left turn lanes, improved traffic signals and crosswalks.

In planning for roads, the demographic outlook for the County (reported in Chapter 1, Background) indicates an increasing percentage of the local workforce will be composed of people commuting into the County from other jurisdictions. This information, along with local population figures, factor into County and municipal transportation plans.

While the incorporated towns implement their own capital plans to support growth, the County must continue to support their efforts to provide the infrastructure necessary to accommodate growth, in order to further this plan's objectives to direct growth to existing population centers.

The County's smart growth strategy encourages compact, pedestrian-friendly development in the Towns and Village Centers. Outside of these growth centers, the goal of the plan is to preserve the rural character of the road system.

Other Transportation Modes

Transit Service

County and town residents are served by specialized transportation services serving the Midshore communities.

Delmarva Community Transit (DCT) offers fixed route shuttle services, flexible routes within and between counties, plus specialized services for seniors and persons with disabilities. Their County Ride program operates on a regular weekday schedule with connections to other transit systems. Queen Anne's County's program also operates a route from Stevensville to Easton, connecting with DCT shuttles. DCT also provides Demand-Response transportation service for seniors and the general public.

Easton Airport (discussed below) is a scheduled stop for BayRunner Shuttle, a commercial transit service connecting Ocean City and Salisbury, MD with BWI Marshall airport. The BWI Amtrak station and Baltimore Greyhound Bus station are additional transit connections via the shuttle, which makes multiple daily trips east and west.

Comprehensive transit service in a rural county the size of Talbot would require substantial subsidy and would not be cost effective given the potential customer base and rural settlement patterns. Presently, the County can be most effective by encouraging new developments in Designated Growth Areas to provide pedestrian linkages between residential areas to nearby neighborhood services.

Higher density development near major roadways should be encouraged to establish locations for future ride-sharing and commuting facilities. The County can also be effective in reducing aggregate total commuting trips by collaborating with the State for "park and ride facilities" to encourage ride sharing.

Non-motorized Transportation

The infrastructure for non-motorized transportation includes sidewalks and pedestrian and bicycle trails. Because of the limited scale of rural development and the County's strategy directing development to towns and designated growth areas, there has been no requirement for rural subdivisions to include 'complete streets' (sidewalks, bike trails or pedestrian connections) within a community. Easements for future pedestrian facilities to facilitate an integrated pedestrian

pathways are stipulated in the development standards for the County's Gateway Overlay Zone in the current zoning ordinance.

There are a number of recreational bike routes throughout Talbot County. These routes traverse scenic rural areas, form loops through various terrain and are interesting enough to appeal to bikers at all levels. These routes have been compiled, mapped and distributed by the Department of Parks and Recreation and promoted by the Office of Tourism. Perhaps the most popular is the Oxford- Bellevue Ferry loop. Other routes on the west side of the County frequently traveled by cyclists include the roads to Bozman and Neavitt (MD 579) and Tilghman Island (MD 33).

As discussed above, the Town of Easton has worked with the State Highway Administration in recent years to create safe crossings between the areas of Town on the opposite sides of State highways.

Air Transportation

The Easton Airport is a County-owned facility overseen by the Easton Airport Manager and County Council, assisted by a five-member Airport Advisory Board.

Easton Airport is one of 84 airports of over 5,000 in the nation to be designated as a National Airport.The designation recognizes the provision of international and national flights over 500 miles, as well as the airport's role in public service and the number of jet aircraft based there. The airport is served by a control tower, erected in 2007, handling about 50,000 takeoffs and landings per year.

The Airport is a general aviation facility that presently hosts 176 aircraft, including 133 single engine planes, 18 multi-engine, 21 jets and four helicopters in its 100 hangar spaces. Tenants provide charter service to destinations throughout the United States and the world, flight training, aircraft maintenance and repair. It is a designated US Navy auxiliary facility for instrument training.

Easton Airport is the home base for Maryland State Police helicopter Trooper 6, providing emergency medical evacuation and law enforcement services in the region. The US Coast Guard uses the airport as an auxiliary operations site when responding to Chesapeake Bay or mid-Atlantic area missions.

Talbot County EMS also has an ambulance and

crew stationed at the airport for deployment around the County. Emergency power generation, area under cover and relatively high elevation also make the airport a secondary site in County Emergency Management plans.

The airport property comprises 654 acres, making the airport one of the County's larger publicly-owned green spaces. When completely built out, runways, parking and other facilities will cover 84 acres in impervious surface. Onsite storm water is diverted to a 20,000 gallon oil/water separator and a system of filter swales and sediment ponds. Onsite spill containment infrastructure includes two engineered fuel truck parking areas with containment features.

Easton Airport is a fiscally self-sufficient enterprise with an annual budget of about $4 million. Capital projects are funded mainly through the FAA Airport Improvement Program, with matching funds through the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) and airport funds. The MAA has estimated the airport generates $22,500,000 per year in business revenue and $1,836,000 in State and local taxes. It generates 413 jobs and $18,355,000 in personal income.

Roadway improvements are being planned for Airport Road and the portion of Goldsboro Neck Road bordering the airport, in support of the airport, the adjacent business park, and future regional hospital development.

Compatible uses, such as airport related businesses and light industry, should be encouraged in appropriate areas nearby. Easton Airport should continue promotion of its Fly Neighborly noise abatement procedures, reducing the amount of air traffic over residential areas.

In the event of a major disaster, Easton Airport may become essential as a hub for evacuation and to receive food, medical supplies and personnel. Given this role and the positive impact to the local economy, County policies should support the continued value of the Easton Airport by assisting the airport to meet FAA safety and operating standards, including reviewing the Airport Overlay Zone for consistency with FAA Part 77 airspace requirements.

Port Services

Easton Point is a small area of land at the Tred Avon riverside, under County jurisdiction but surrounded by the Town of Easton. It is the County's only industrial port, where bulk materials are delivered by barge in modest quantities. It is also the site of a County public landing, a private marina with boatyards and related facilities.

Historically the County has recommended that the northern and western edges of Easton Point should continue to be planned for port-related and marine transportation activities, including regular dredging of the Tred Avon River approach channel.

However, this area has obvious redevelopment potential and is identified as a future growth

area in the 2010 Easton Comprehensive Plan. The Plan states:

> *(T)he future of the port is most likely a mixed use project with a strong recreational component to include uses such as an expanded marina, boat ramp, and a waterfront park or open space with less emphasis on truly industrial uses. Higher density (i.e. townhouse or apartment) residential and commercial uses would also seem to be an appropriate part of the mix in any redevelopment plan.*

Rail Service

Rail service in Talbot County has been discontinued for some years. Though new service is not anticipated, future uses could include the revival of limited light rail service on rights-of-way owned by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). The County encourages the retention of rail rights-of-way for future use. Pedestrian/ bike trails are appropriate interim uses for these corridors.

The Town of Easton has constructed a pedestrian/bike trail along a portion of the old rail bed in the center of town. The original rail -trail extended from Idewild Avenue north to North Easton Park. Recently, trail connections have been planned to extend the trail network to other parts of town, creating the potential for a dedicated Easton to St Michaels trail.

Utilities

Apart from wastewater treatment facilities (discussed in the Natural Resources chapter), Talbot County operates no public utilities. Nevertheless, the County has zoning and regulatory responsibility for several modern utility services. Cellular phone service emerged as an issue in the 1990s and has become one of the most contentious areas of public debate. In recent years broadband services, wind turbines and solar panels have come under some level of County oversight.

Wireless Communications Towers

The Talbot County Council, in 2008, entered into a study to create an orderly process for the placement and use of communications towers. At issue was the prospect of competing utilities erecting stand-alone towers in proximity to one another and being incompatible with the character of rural communities.

Following a study of the existing network and gaps in coverage, the County adopted a Priority Placement Areas map for future towers (see map on facing page). Co-location is required when possible in order to expand coverage to underserved areas and to increase coverage in areas of existing service.

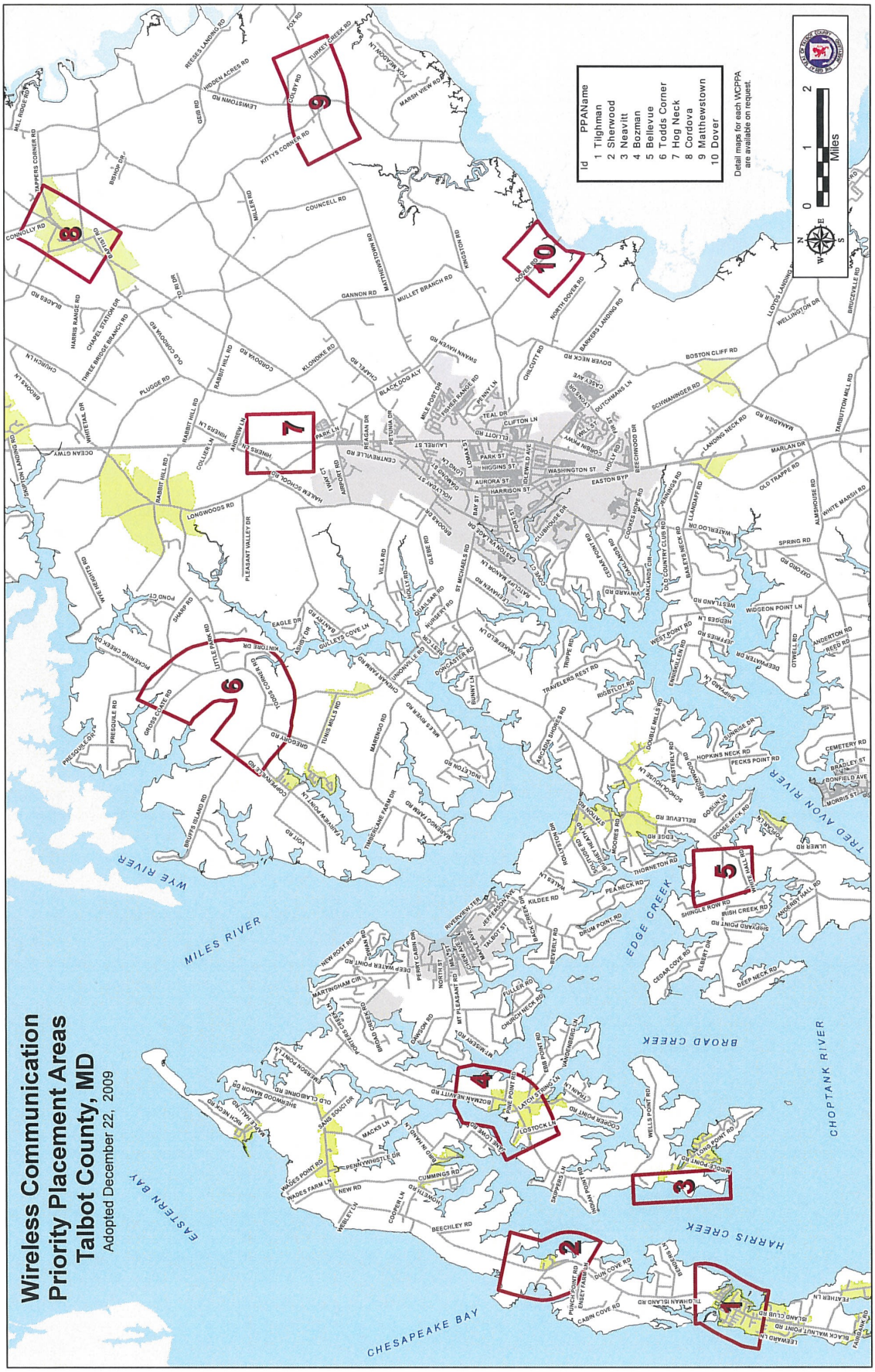
Since the zoning ordinance was amended in 2010, there have been several applications to fill gaps in the cellular network, while upgrades or additional antennas on existing towers have been more common. Because finding suitable sites for new towers in some areas has remained difficult, the Council passed a Concealed Towers amendment in 2012.

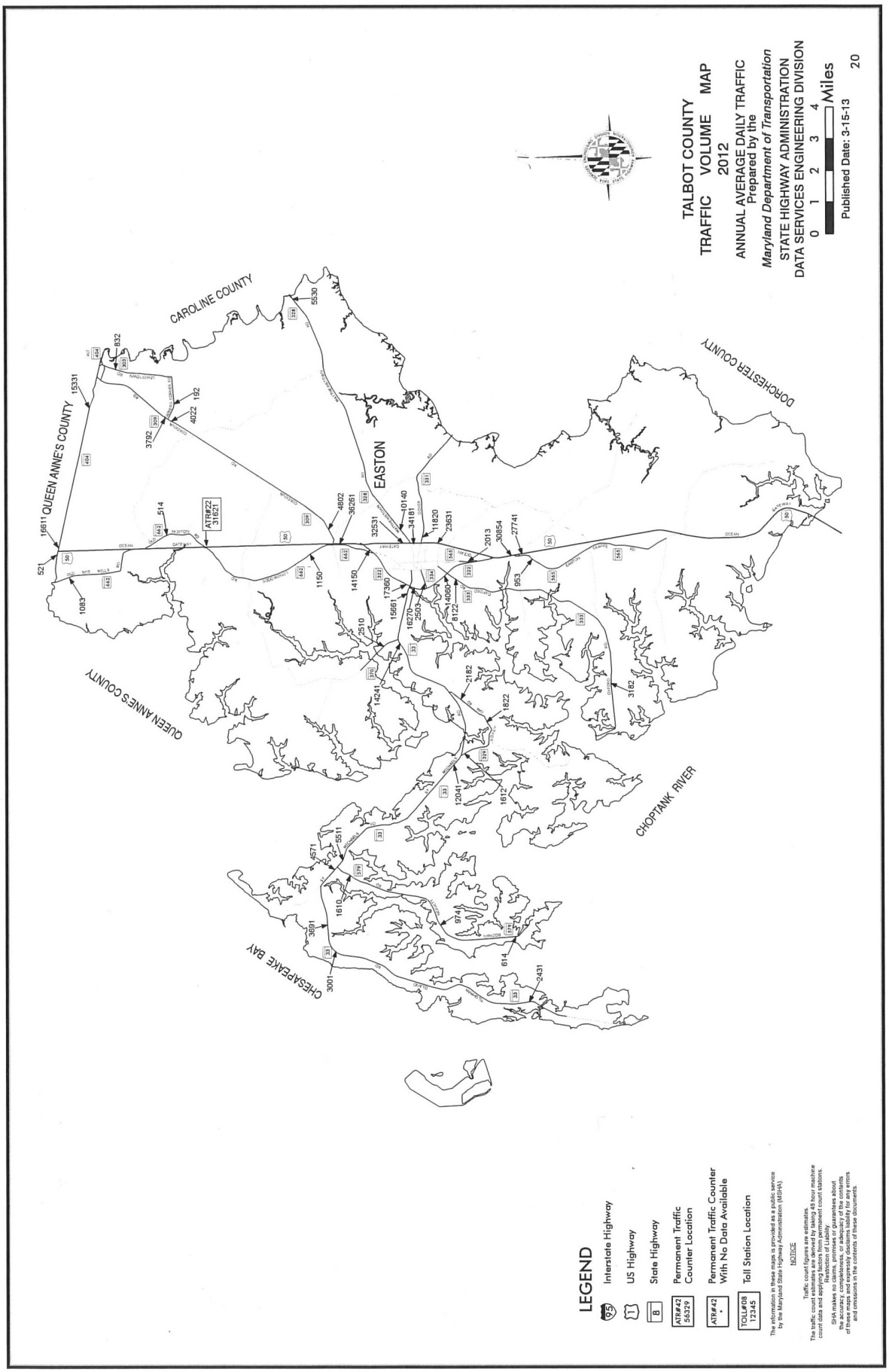
Wind

Interest in alternative energy generation has grown in recent years as technology has advanced and equipment has been marketed to homeowners. Talbot County has chosen to apply the existing zoning code to some aspects of wind generation systems.

Presently small wind turbine systems are limited to single site energy consumption, with production, height and density limits and a maximum number of units per property.

Other conditions are applied to small wind turbine production facilities, including an assessment of visual impact, design specifications. Turbines can be up to 160 feet tall and developed at a greater density under current ordinances.


Wireless Communication
Priority Placement Areas
Talbot County, MD
Adopted December 22, 2009
Id PPAName
1 Tilghman
2 Sherwood
3 Neavitt
4 Bozman
5 Bellevue
6 Todds Corner
7 Hog Neck
8 Cordova
9 Matthewstown
10 Dover
Detail maps for each WCPPA are available on request.
0 1 2 Miles
N E S W
CHESAPEAKE BAY
EASTERN BAY
MILES RIVER
WYE RIVER
EDGE CREEK
BROAD CREEK
HARRIS CREEK
CHOPTANK RIVER
TRED AVON RIVER


TALBOT COUNTY
TRAFFIC VOLUME MAP
2012
ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC
Prepared by the
Maryland Department of Transportation
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
DATA SERVICES ENGINEERING DIVISION
0 1 2 3 4 Miles
Published Date: 3-15-13
20
LEGEND
Interstate Highway
US Highway
State Highway
Permanent Traffic Counter Location
Permanent Traffic Counter With No Data Available
Toll Station Location
The information in these maps is provided as a public service by the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA)
NOTICE
Traffic count figures are estimates.
The traffic counts were collected using 48 hour machine count data and applying factors from permanent count stations.
Restriction of Liability
SHA makes no claims, promises or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of these maps and expressly disclaims liability for any errors and omissions in the contents of these documents.
CAROLINE COUNTY
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY
DORCHESTER COUNTY
EASTON
CHESAPEAKE BAY
CHOPTANK RIVER

Topic	Citation	Policy	Action
Transportation Planning	County Code Chapter 134: Roads and Bridges § 134-10 134-12 134-7.5	The County Thoroughfare Plan will guide future road development decisions. The road network will consist of a coordinated hierarchy of arterial, collector and local roads. Access to the arterial network should be primarily from collector roads. Local roads should access the collector system and not the arterial network.	To Do: Establish a formal system to update the County's Transportation Planning Study based on future growth. The Thoroughfare Plan should recommend future requirements for adequate rights-of-way, taking into account existing and future development and proposed alternative transportation support facilities and
		The County should address ways to evacuate people located in "one road in, one road out" areas that must be evacuated in case of emergencies, especially MD 33 and MD 333.	(See Community Services) Done: Coordinate State and county road planning initiatives with emergency management agencies. An emergency evacuation plan, for use in the event of severe weather or a catastrophic event, should be developed
		Improvements to existing US 50 would be the most appropriate means to facilitate traffic flow through the central portion of the County and would be in the best interest of both the County and the Towns of Easton and Trappe.	Done: SHA improvements to existing US 50 include additional lanes to access businesses, signalization improvements and crosswalks at key intersections.
		The County does not desire to have MD 322 viewed as an alternative to US 50 for through traffic.	To do: MD 322 should be reclassified as a minor arterial.
	County Code Chapter 134: Roads and Bridges	The County will encourage the continued improvement of the entire County road network and will ensure that all improvements further the land use, environmental and transportation goals of the County Comprehensive Plan. New road construction and improvements will promote traffic safety, provide for improved vehicular capacity consistent with area land uses and regional demands and resource protection policies of the Comprehensive Plan.	Done: Impacts to State, County and Town roadways are considered during the development review process. Roadway widths are designed for appropriate speeds on local streets to encourage pedestrian safety and ambiance and to reduce impervious surface. New developments shall have adequate access and circulation for public safety and utility vehicles.

Transportation Planning		New road construction will be sensitive to the County's goal of preserving the environment and rural character. Road improvements shall be context sensitive.	To do: Update design and capacity standards to ensure an appropriate relationship for function and classification. Update the Roads Ordinance and Thoroughfare Plan appropriately.
	County Code Chapter 134: Roads and Bridges § 134-6.1	The County may require that proposed roads in new developments provide appropriate connections to adjacent properties in order to insure adequate connectivity in the overall road system.	Done: The County's Access Management controls seek to appropriately space curb cuts based on roadway type.
		New roads serving residential neighborhoods should be designed to ensure safety and convenience for all users including motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, utility and emergency vehicles. The County and towns should coordinate planning for transportation improvements in or near a town or within the designated growth area.	To do: Reduce traffic speeds in residential areas via roadway design methods including traffic controls, roadway design and layout. Ensure that ingress/ egress for large vehicles is planned.
		Setback and other development lines should recognize the ultimate traffic loads of the adjacent road and should allow for ultimate road size. New roads serving residential neighborhoods should be designed to ensure safety and convenience for all users including motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and emergency vehicles.	Done: Ensure that roadway design and capacity standards are appropriately related to roadway function and classification. Done: A Highway Corridor Overlay or an Entrance Corridor Overlay Zone should apply where the desired setback or access restriction differs from the requirements of the conventional zoning districts. (See Community Design and Appearance)